

Message Text

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ALSO FOR USEEC

DEPARTMENT FOR S/P LAKE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, XT, FR, US

SUBJECT: WEST EUROPEAN FACTOR IN AMERICAN FOREIGN
POLICY: FRANCE

REF: STATE 216662

SUMMARY: FRENCH POLICY, UNDER GISCARD'S LEADERSHIP, HAS BEEN LARGELY CONSISTENT WITH OUR MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY GOALS. UNTIL MARCH, ELECTORAL CONSIDERATIONS ARE LIKELY TO DOMINATE MOST FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY ACTIVITY. SO FAR, FORTUNATELY, GISCARD APPARENTLY CONSIDERS HIS US CONNECTION TO BE A POLITICAL ASSET RATHER THAN A LIABILITY, THOUGH WE CAN EXPECT HIS GOVERNMENT TO TAKE US ON WHERE ISSUES OF FRENCH NATIONALISM OR "INDEPENDENCE" ARE INVOLVED. A GOVERNMENT OF THE LEFT - EVEN IF THE SOCIALISTS DOMINATED IT - WOULD BE FAR LESS IN TUNE WITH US POLICY OBJECTIVES. FOR THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD, WE NEED NOT FEEL OVERLY RESTRAINED FROM PRESSING WITH THE FRENCH OUR MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY GOALS. BUT, WHERE POSSIBLE, WE WILL WANT TO AVOID COMPLICATING GISCARD'S ELECTORAL STRATEGY. END SUMMARY

1. FRENCH COOPERATION WITH THE US, AND WITH ITS CHIEF EUROPEAN PARTNERS HAS IN RECENT YEARS GREATLY IMPROVED. THIS IS A RESULT OF THE PASSAGE OF TIME SINCE THE PERIOD OF GENERAL DE GAULLE, THE DIFFERENT OUTLOOK
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AND STYLE OF TODAY'S FRENCH LEADERS, AND THE INCREASINGLY SOBER FRENCH PERCEPTION OF THE EAST-WEST POWER BALANCE AND OTHER ASPECTS OF THE GLOBAL SCENE. PRESIDENT GISCARD HAS BEEN THE PRIMARY AGENT OF THE IMPROVEMENT. THE EVOLUTION IN FRENCH POLICY OVER WHICH HE HAS PRESIDED REPRESENTS AN ASSET FOR THE US IN THE MOSAIC OF OUR EUROPEAN AND GLOBAL INTERESTS: IN HELPING TO REINFORCE THE WESTERN FABRIC OF SECURITY IN FACE OF GROWING SOVIET POWER; IN STRENGTHENING, IN PARTICULAR, GERMAN, BRITISH AND MEDITERRANEAN POLITICAL SELF-CONFIDENCE; IN FACILITATING THE WORK OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY; AND IN ENABLING GREATER FRANCO-US AND US-EUROPEAN COOPERATION ON KEY PROBLEMS OF COMMON INTEREST IN THIRD AREAS. THERE REMAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US - E.G., OVER

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NON-PROLIFERATION, OVER CONCORDE AND POTENTIALLY
OVER TRADE. NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE TODAY IN A PERIOD
OF CLOSER FRANCO-US BILATERAL RELATIONS THAN AT ANY
TIME SINCE THE PRE-DE GAULLE PERIOD.

2. HOW IS THE CURRENT POLITICAL CAMPAIGN IN FRANCE LIKELY TO AFFECT THIS RELATIONSHIP? FROM NOW UNTIL MARCH ELECTORAL CONSIDERATIONS WILL BE NEAR THE BOTTOM LINE OF VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT DOES IN THE FOREIGN POLICY FIELD. AS THE CAMPAIGN HEATS UP THERE WILL BE INCREASING PRESSURE ON GISCARD TO ASSERT FRENCH "INDEPENDENCE"; SOMETIMES THIS WILL BE AT OUR EXPENSE. (HIS NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW OF LAST JULY COULD BE A HARBINGER) IN ANY CASE, BEING CAUSTIC TOWARD US AND MANY OTHERS REMAINS A GAULLIST TRADITION AND INDEED CONTINUES TO BE GENERALLY POPULAR IN FRANCE. THUS WE CAN EXPECT THE FRENCH TO CONTINUE TO HAMMER AT US ON CONCORDE. THEY MAY TRY ANOTHER SHOT OR TWO ON HUMAN RIGHTS RIGHTS, TAKING THEIR CUE FROM OUR ATTITUDE AT BELGRADE. THEY CANNOT ALLOW THE OUTCOME OF THE NUCLEAR DEAL WITH PAKISTAN TO LOOK LIKE A CAVE-IN TO US PRESSURE. THEY WILL ALSO BE QUICK TO STRIKE BACK ON MINOR IRRITANTS, WHICH IN THIS SETTING CAN BECOME MAJOR IF THEY PERSIST. FOR INSTANCE, ATTEMPTS TO APPLY US ANTI-TRUST LEGISLATION IN AREAS WHERE FRANCE FEELS IT HAS AND SHOULD KEEP EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION WILL ENCOURAGE EXPLOITATION OF THE IMAGE OF THE UNITED STATES AS AN "IMPERIAL", "NEO-COLONIALIST" POWER, AND THUS HELP MAKE US THE TARGET OF GAULLIST RESISTANCE AND LEFT-WING CRITICISM. SIMILAR EFFORTS WITH REGARD TO ANTI-BOYCOTT LEGISLATION WILL REINFORCE THE IMAGE.

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3. NEVERTHELESS, THERE ARE SOME POSITIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR FOREIGN POLICY CONCERNS EVEN DURING THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN:

- FIRST, GISCARD HAS PERSONAL, SUBSTANTIVE -- AND SOMETIMES EVEN ELECTORAL -- REASONS FOR WANTING TO PRESS FORWARD ON GLOBAL POLICIES WHICH ARE CONSISTENT WITH OURS. HE WILL WANT TO KEEP FRANCE IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE SEARCH FOR A MORE STABLE EAST-WEST RELATIONSHIP (AND HE NO DOUBT CONSIDERS BARRE'S CORDIAL RECEPTION BY THE BREZHNEV LEADERSHIP AS AN ASSET FOR THE MAJORITY IN MARCH). HE WILL WANT TO REMAIN ENGAGED -- CONSTRUCTIVELY, IN THE MAIN -- IN AFRICA (THE GOF'S ARMS ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE WAS A DOMESTIC PLUS FOR HIM) AND IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE IS DEVELOPING A NEW FRENCH POSTURE ON DISARMAMENT, PARTLY TO STAKE OUT POSITIONS VIS-A-VIS THE FRENCH LEFT, WHICH IS INCLINED TOWARD SOFTNESS

IN THIS FIELD; HIS MORE POSITIVE APPROACH ON NUCLEAR
NON-PROLIFERATION IS ALREADY AN ENCOURAGING ASPECT OF
THIS. AND HE WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE A MAJOR INTEREST
IN ENERGY AND NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES, WHICH GO TO THE
HEART OF FRENCH ECONOMIC CONCERNS. INDEED IN THE
SHORT-TERM, THE FOREIGN POLICY AREA IN WHICH
THE FRENCH MAJORITY HAS THE HIGHEST ELECTORAL STAKE
IS INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION, SINCE
POLICIES TO ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC EXPANSION IN THE US, THE
FRG AND JAPAN COULD HELP BARRE (AND GISCARD) ARGUE
DOMESTICALLY IN THE COMING MONTHS THAT FRANCE IS ON
THE RIGHT TRACK AND THAT A LEFT GOVERNMENT WOULD
JEOPARDIZE THE GAINS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE TO DATE.

- SECOND, GISCARD HAS APPARENTLY DECIDED THAT
CLOSE FRANCO-US RELATIONS ARE NOT A CAMPAIGN
LIABILITY FOR HIM; HE HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY EAGER
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FOR A VISIT BY THE PRESIDENT. HE SEES THE RECENT
BARRE VISIT TO WASHINGTON AS A PLUS, AND WE TAKE
AT FACE VALUE BARRE'S ASSERTION ON HIS RETURN
THAT HE WAS "REASSURED." MOREOVER, ON A NUMBER
OF THE MOST SENSITIVE BILATERAL ISSUES THE FRENCH
SEEM PREPARED TO DEFER POSSIBLE SHOWDOWNS WITH US:
THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL FUEL CYCLE
EVALUATION MEETINGS REDUCES THE CHANCES THAT NON-
PROLIFERATION ISSUES WILL COME TO A BOIL IN THE
NEAR TERM, AND THEY SEEM READY TO FORESTALL
ACTUAL DECISIONS IN THE MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS UNTIL THE ELECTIONS ARE OUT OF THE WAY.

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- THIRD, THERE IS A CONSTITUTIONAL REASON WHY GISCARD MAY BE MORE ACTIVE IN THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS FIELD IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE ELECTION WILL BE FOUGHT LARGELY ON DOMESTIC, RATHER THAN INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. GISCARD HAS REPEATEDLY STATED THAT HE INTENDS TO REMAIN IN THE PRESIDENCY, REGARDLESS OF WHO WINS THE NEXT LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. THE FIFTH REPUBLIC CONSTITUTION GIVES THE PRESIDENT BROAD AND SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENSE AND FOREIGN ECONOMIC POLICY. MOREOVER, GISCARD PERSONALLY EXPECTS THAT THE ELECTION WILL PRESENT HIM EITHER WITH A CENTRIST COALITION (IN WHICH THE RPR INFLUENCE IS REDUCED) WITH WHICH HE WILL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE TO WORK ALONG HIS NOW ESTABLISHED LINES, OR WITH A

SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL SOON FRACTURE AND BE REPLACED BY A SOCIALIST OR SOCIALIST-CENTRIST GOVERNMENT. WE OURSELVES BELIEVE THAT THE RANGE OF POSSIBLE ELECTION OUTCOMES IS CONSIDERABLY BROADER. HOWEVER, THE FACT THAT GISCARD PERCEIVES IT IN THIS LIGHT, AND IS NOW FURTHER BUOYED BY THE INCREASINGLY DEEP RIFT WHICH IS DEVELOPING WITHIN THE LEFT, IS A REASON WHY HE MIGHT FEEL LESS LIMITED IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS THAN OTHERWISE, AND CERTAINLY LESS LIMITED THAN THE HEAD OF STATE IN A SYSTEM WHERE THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS POWERS ARE CONSTITUTIONALLY DIVIDED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

4. AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THESE ELECTORAL FACTORS WE DISCUSS BELOW SPECIFIC US GLOBAL AND EUROPEAN GOALS IN FRANCE.

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5. ECONOMIC RELATIONS.

AS AN ECONOMIST OF STATURE, BARRE IS IN THE FOREFRONT OF THOSE WHO SHARE OUR RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC STRUCTURAL REFORM TO ABSORB RISING ENERGY COSTS AND THE GROWING DIVERGENCIES BETWEEN THE LDC'S AND THE INDUSTRIALIZED STATES. WE WILL THEREFORE CONTINUE TO FIND SYMPATHY IN FRANCE, WHICH SPONSORED THE NORTH-SOUTH EXERCISE, FOR OUR GENERAL ASPIRATIONS FOR MAINTAINING AND FOSTERING GLOBAL ECONOMIC STRENGTH. IN PRACTICE, DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTION MAY PERSIST. THUS, IN THE NORTH-SOUTH CONTEXT FRANCE WILL CONTINUE TO GIVE VERBAL SUPPORT TO THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER, WHILE DEFINING ITS CONTENT TO SUIT FRENCH INTERESTS, AND WILL CONTINUE TO VIGOROUSLY DEFEND HER OWN INTERESTS, AS RECENT ACTION ON SUGAR AND TEXTILES DEMONSTRATES. OUR TWO COUNTRIES ARE, HOWEVER, IN GENERAL AGREEMENT ON THE DEBT AND COMMON FUND ISSUES. AS REGARDS THE CURRENT TRADE NEGOTIATIONS, FRANCE HAS MORE MODEST OBJECTIVES THAN WE. FRANCE CURRENTLY RUNS A SUBSTANTIAL TRADE DEFICIT WITH THE U.S., A CAUSE FOR CONCERN HERE SINCE U.S. RECOVERY IS PULLING IN IMPORTS FROM ALL OVER.

6. ENERGY AND NON-PROLIFERATION.

HAVE THE GREATEST POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE FRICTION BETWEEN US AND FRANCE, IS ENERGY; AND IN PARTICULAR, THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONTINUING WORLD ADJUSTMENT TO THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SURPLUS OF THE OIL PRODUCERS. FRANCE, WHICH HAS FEW INDEPENDENT ENERGY
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RESOURCES, WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK TO ASSURE ITSELF OF ENERGY SUPPLIES, INCLUDING GREATER PRODUCTION OF ATOMIC ENERGY.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, THE CURRENT RAPID INCREASE IN U.S. OIL IMPORTS, WITH ITS ACCOMPANYING PAYMENTS PROBLEM, IS CAUSING DEEP FRENCH CONCERN THAT THE U.S. WILL BECOME A MUCH MORE AGGRESSIVE EXPORTER, OR WILL BECOME MORE PROTECTIONIST, OR BOTH. FUTURE COOPERATION BY THE EUROPEANS, ESPECIALLY THE FRENCH, WILL INCREASINGLY DEPEND ON THEIR PERCEPTION

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OF U.S. ACTIONS, INCLUDING ACTIONS BY THE CONGRESS,
TO EFFECTIVELY REDUCE OUR OIL IMPORTS.

IN THE SECOND PLACE, FRENCH CONCERNS OVER ENERGY AFFECT OUR MAJOR COMMITMENTS IN THE FIELD OF NON-PROLIFERATION. GISCARD, IN A REMARKABLE EFFORT, HAS ALREADY MOVED FRANCE FORWARD BY A MAJOR STEP IN DRASTICALLY CURTAILING WHAT HAS BEEN LAISSEZ-FAIRE APPROACH IN THIS DOMAIN UNDER CHIRAC'S AND PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS. DURING THE PAST MONTHS FRANCE HAS EVEN ACQUIESCED TO A TEMPORARY DELAY IN MAKING FURTHER COMMITMENTS TOWARD PLUTONIUM BY AGREEING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INFCE. NEVERTHELESS, THERE ARE DANGERS. IN THE SHORT TERM, A POTENTIAL STRAIN IN US-FRENCH RELATIONS WILL ARISE IF THE GLENN AMENDMENT IS INVOKED AGAINST FULFILLMENT OF THE FRENCH CONTRACT TO SELL A REPROCESSING PLANT TO PAKISTAN. SUCH A FINDING WOULD SPOTLIGHT THE SALE AND RESULT IN CONGRESSIONAL AND PRESS OUTCRY AGAINST FRANCE AS WELL. IN THE LONGER TERM, WHILE INFCE HAS BOUGHT TIME, TOWARD THE END OF THE INFCE CYCLE WE WILL FACE DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE FRENCH, WHO WOULD PUT UP DETERMINED RESISTANCE TO ANY RENEWED US EFFORTS TO ATTACK THE PLUTONIUM ECONOMY.

7. THE LONDON GOALS, NATO AND DISARMAMENT.

IT IS ANOTHER OF THE MORE HEARTENING SYMPTOMS OF THE CHANGING BEHAVIOR OF FRANCE THAT THE GOF HAS BEEN

SUPPORTIVE IN PRINCIPLE OF THE DEFENSE IMPROVEMENTS
CALLED FOR AT THE LONDON SUMMIT. IF THE USG IS SERIOUS
ABOUT WISHING TO ENCOURAGE GOF PARTICIPATION IN NATO
DEFENSE IMPROVEMENTS, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO DEVISE
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SOLUTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ONGOING WORK IN
BRUSSELS. IT WILL NOT SUFFICE TO SAY THAT THE FRENCH
MAY HAVE ACCESS TO THE PAPERS OF THE VARIOUS WORKING
GROUPS. THE FRENCH REGARD THIS AS, IN EFFECT,
PRESENTING THEM WITH A SERIES OF FAITS ACCOMPLIS.
MOREOVER, IT REMAINS CLEAR THAT THE FRENCH WILL NOT JOIN
THE DPC. WHAT IS IMPORTANT AND NEW IS THAT THEY ARE
WILLING TO BE ENGAGED. WE NEED TO FIND A MEANS TO
REALIZE THEIR PARTICIPATION. AT THE SAME TIME WE SHOULD
CONTINUE TO PRESS THE FRENCH TO BE AS FORTHCOMING VIS-A-
VIS NATO AS THEIR POLITICAL SITUATION WILL PERMIT.

IN THE DISARMAMENT FIELD GOF HAS ALSO BEEN
PRIVATELY SYMPATHETIC, THOUGH RESERVED ON CERTAIN ISSUES.
CTB, FOR INSTANCE, RUNS COUNTER TO THE GOF'S PERCEIVED
SELF-INTEREST IN COMPLETING THEIR WEAPONS TESTING
PROGRAMS. EVEN SO, GOF HAS TOLD US THAT IT WILL NOT
PUBLICLY OPPOSE US-USSR-UK CTB NEGOTIATIONS AS LONG AS
FRANCE IS NOT SINGLED OUT FOR PUBLIC CRITICISMS OF ITS
CONTINUED NUCLEAR TESTING. PART OF THE GENERALLY
POSITIVE FRENCH ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ADMINISTRATION'S
DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS IS ONCE MORE DUE TO THE RECENT
CLOSE CONSULTATION AT SENIOR LEVELS. THESE SESSIONS,
COUPLED WITH THE LONDON SUMMIT AND THE BARRE VISIT, HAVE
MAINTAINED A VALUABLE DIALOGUE. ADDITIONAL PLANNED
CONSULTATIONS SHOULD FURTHER INSTITUTIONALIZE THESE
CONTACTS. WITH REGARD TO EFFORTS TO LIMIT THE SPREAD
OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS, THE FRENCH -- CONSCIOUS THAT THEIR
ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY DEPENDS ON EXPORT SALES -- ARE
SKEPTICAL THAT ANYTHING MEANINGFUL CAN BE ACHIEVED.
HOWEVER, THEY HAVE BEEN WILLING TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE
WITH US AND ARE NOW WAITING TO DETERMINE IF THE USG CAN

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ENGAGE THE SOVIETS IN THIS AREA.

GOF INTEREST IN DISARMAMENT IN GENERAL HAS ALSO INCREASED SINCE THE DECISION BY PRESIDENT GISCARD, ANNOUNCED AUGUST 24, TO LAUNCH A UNIQUELY FRENCH DISARMAMENT INITIATIVE. THE FRENCH ARE CONSIDERING VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES FOR THAT INITIATIVE, WHICH WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT THE MAY 1978 UN SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT. THERE TOO WE SHOULD CONTINUE OUR CONSULTATIONS IN SYMPATHETIC SPIRITS WITH A VIEW TO

PERHAPS INFLUENCING THE ULTIMATE GOF DECISION ON THE SHAPE OF THE INITIATIVE.

8. FRANCE AND THE THIRD WORLD.

-- AFRICA: AS REGARDS SOUTH AFRICA, GISCARD IS IF ANYTHING MORE ACTIVIST AND TOUGH THAN SOME OF HIS BUSINESS ORIENTED CONSTITUENTS WOULD LIKE. A SIGNIFICANT SHORT-TERM LOSS OF FRENCH BUSINESS RESULTING FROM FRENCH PRESSURES WOULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE ADVERSE RESULTS FOR THE MARCH ELECTIONS. NEVERTHELESS FRANCE WILL CONTINUE TO BE PREPARED TO SUPPORT US IN PLAYING A MODERATING AND HELPFUL ROLE. THIS MAY BE LESS THE CASE ON OTHER AFRICAN ISSUES. GOF SEES RHODESIA AS PRIMARILY A BRITISH PROBLEM FOR HISTORIC REASONS. EAST AFRICAN INFLUENCE IN ANY CASE IS LIMITED -- AS GUIRINGAUD'S RECENT TRIP THERE SHOWED. THE FRENCH WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO VALUE THEIR SPECIAL RELATIONS WITH FRANCOPHONE AFRICA, AND HELP US THERE FROM TIME TO TIME. HOWEVER THEY SHOULD NOT BE COUNTED ON TO PLACE THESE ASSETS AT OUR DISPOSAL AUTOMATICALLY EXCEPT WHEN FRENCH INTEREST IS ALSO SERVED.

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-- MIDDLE EAST: ON THE OTHER HAND, FRENCH INTEREST IN FINDING A SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT IN THE ME REMAINS KEEN. FOR THE TIME BEING, FRENCH ENERGY INTERESTS IN PARTICULAR WILL LEAD THEM TO MAINTAIN THEIR MARKED TILT TOWARD THE ARAB SIDE, THOUGH THEY WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL.

-- ASIA: AS REGARDS ASIA, WHERE THE FRENCH ROLE IS NOW CIRCUMSCRIBED, WE HAVE SOME INTEREST IN MAKING SURE THAT THE "TRI-REGIONAL COOPERATION" ENUNCIATED AT THE RAMBOUILLET SUMMIT BE CONTINUED. FRENCH-JAPANESE RELATIONS REMAIN STRAINED BY TRADE IMBALANCES. AS FAR AS FRANCE IS CONCERNED, THE TRI-REGIONAL PATTERN THEREFORE REMAINS LOPSIDED. EFFORTS TO MAKE THE TRIANGLE MORE BALANCED WILL HAVE BENEFICIAL POLITICAL EFFECTS IN ASIA AND IN EUROPE. A PRE-ELECTION BARRE VISIT TO THE PRC REFLECTS AN EFFORT NOT ONLY TO BROADEN BARRE'S IMAGE BUT ALSO TO SHOW FRANCE AS BEING IN CONTACT WITH THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP. THE FRENCH MIGHT TEND TO SUCCUMB TO THE TEMPTATION OF TRANSFERRING MORE ADVANCED MILITARY TECHNOLOGY TO CHINA THAN WE MIGHT WISH. THIS SHOULD BE WATCHED CAREFULLY IN THE WAKE OF A CHINESE MILITARY MISSION'S VISIT HERE THIS MONTH.

9. HUMAN RIGHTS AND DETENTE.

GISCARD'S CRITICISM OF OUR TACTICAL APPROACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS WAS BASED ON THE IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHES TO DETENTE AS SUCH AND TO FRANCE'S DISTINCTIVE ROLE IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS; ON A VIEW THAT OUR INITIAL APPROACHES WERE UNREALISTIC; AND ON A FEAR THAT THE US INITIATIVES HAD MADE HIM VULNERABLE BEFORE HIS DOMESTIC CONSTITUENCY. EXCEPT FOR THE OUTBURST IN NEWSWEEK, HOWEVER, MOST OF THE FRENCH CRITICISM WAS VERY EARLY IN THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. AS US-SOVIET RELATIONS SETTLE DOWN, WE EXPECT TO HEAR LESS OF IT. MOREOVER,
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THESE DIFFERENCES IN TACTICAL NUANCE SHOULD NOT OBSCURE THE FACT THAT FOR HISTORIC AND FOR CULTURAL REASONS, THE FRENCH COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS IS REAL, SERIOUS AND ACTIVE. NEVERTHELESS, THE FRENCH ARE LIKELY TO BE MORE RETICENT THAN WE ON BASKET THREE ISSUES AT BELGRADE. IN WE WILL HAVE TO TAKE FULL ACCOUNT OF THE NEED TO PRESERVE ALLIED UNITY AS WELL AS THE DESIRABILITY, IN THIS PRE-ELECTORAL PERIOD, OF AVOIDING MAJOR DIFFERENCES WITH GISCARD.

10. THE CURRENTLY DEEPENING DIVISION BETWEEN PS AND PCF MAKE IT EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TODAY THAN SOME WEEKS AGO TO PREDICT FRENCH POLICY ORIENTATIONS BEYOND THE MARCH ELECTIONS. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT A GOVERNMENT OF THE LEFT, EVEN IF FULLY DOMINATED BY THE

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O R 041802Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9794

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USMISSION GENEVA

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PS, WOULD NOT BE AS SUPPORTIVE OF A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT
US INTERESTS AS THE PRESENT MAJORITY -- E.G., IN
ECONOMIC RELATIONS, IN POLICY TOWARD THE FRG, IN
ATTITUDE TOWARD NATO AND IN STRATEGIC AND DISARMAMENT
AREAS.

11. THIS DOES NOT MEAN, OF COURSE, THAT AN ELECTION
VICTORY FOR THE MAJORITY WOULD BE TROUBLE-FREE FOR US
INTERESTS, PARTICULARLY IF IT INCREASED CHIRAC'S
INFLUENCE, IF IT EXACERBATED THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
ISSUES WHICH ARE AT THE HEART OF THE CURRENT MALAISE
IN FRANCE, OR IF IT WEAKENED THE PS TO THE POINT WHERE
THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT POWER ON THE LEFT WAS THE PCF.
WHATEVER THE ELECTION OUTCOME, WE CAN COUNT TO SOME
DEGREE ON THE CONSTRAINTS POSED BY FRANCE'S NEED TO
PRESERVE ITS US, ITS FRG, AND ITS EC TIES TO DEFINE
FAIRLY NARROWLY THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO WHATEVER
GOVERNMENT EMERGES.

12. FOR THE TIME BEING, ONE OF THE MAJOR ELEMENTS IN OUR POLICY SHOULD BE, WHERE POSSIBLE, TO AVOID COMPLICATING THE CENTRIST STRATEGY PURSUED BY GISCARD, THOUGH IT IS FAR FROM CLEAR THAT IT WILL PROVE VIABLE DOMESTICALLY. THE QUESTION OF TRADE-OFFS MUST BE SEEN IN THAT POLICY CONTEXT. FOR MOST OF OUR MAJOR GOALS WE HAVE THE SUPPORT AND COOPERATION OF THE CURRENT FRENCH GOVERNMENT. IN AREAS WHERE THERE ARE DIFFERENCES WE WILL HAVE TO BE SENSITIVE TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT OVERLY AGGRESSIVE PURSUIT OF US POLICIES COULD COMPLICATE GISCARD'S ELECTORAL PROBLEMS. THIS IS NOT A PRESCRIPTION FOR LAYING OFF THE FRENCH ON ISSUES THAT CONCERN THE US -- AS WE HAVE SEEN IN NON-PROLIFERATION AND OTHER AREAS, THEY ARE SUSCEPTIBLE
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TO US PERSUASION. IT IS A PLEA FOR CLOSE BIIATERAL CONSULTATIONS AND FOR CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF DOMESTIC CONSEQUENCES IN FRANCE OF POSSIBLE US ACTIONS.
HARTMAN

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 04-Oct-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D770361-1220
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Litigation History:
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Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
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To: STATE
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